

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE PRESS RELEASE: ICOC Approves Contract Policies, Refinements To Conflicts Of Interest For Working Groups Board Formalizes Position on Federal Legislation

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EMERYVILLE, CA - The Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee (ICOC) for the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) met last Friday at the University of San California, San Diego to hear recommendations from the Governance Subcommittee on contract policies and procedures and to make final refinements to the conflicts of interest policies for the three working groups.

Members of the board also signed a letter to California's US Senators Boxer and Feinstein, in formal support of the federal legislation calling for a ban on human reproductive cloning (Feinstein-Hatch, S. 1520) and opposing another measure outlawing somatic cell nuclear transfer (Brownback, S. 658). The ICOC wrote, "Millions of patients suffering from devastating chronic disease and injury and their families support the pursuit of ethical embryonic stem cell research.

. . . Somatic cell nuclear transfer is a critical technology. . . It is vital that scientists are allowed to use it to investigate new treatments.";

The ICOC approved the Recommended Policy and Procedures for Contracting and Proposed Policy for Approval of Contracts and Interagency Agreements. Interagency contracts will fall under the purview of the CIRM President; contracts greater than \$100,000 will be approved by the Governance Subcommittee; and those contracts greater than \$250,000 will need to be approved of the full ICOC. Contracts for Remcho, Johansen & Purcell and Edelman were unanimously approved.

The oversight committee also agreed on the refinements to the conflicts of interest policies for the working groups, including making the policies consistent with respect to a financial threshold of \$5,000 for both working group members and their immediate family members. The board approved these policies, pending additional language that will stipulate that CIRM staff, under the auspices of the CIRM President, publicly disclose the working group members' interests when conflicts arise.

Interim President Zach Hall, Ph.D, presented a new format for reporting funding recommendations to the ICOC, which the board approved. The CIRM scientific staff will prepare scientific summaries of those grant applications recommended for funding that will serve as the source of scientific information for the ICOC's review and decision-making. The group also ensured confidentiality for those applicants not selected for funding. These applications will become public only if the ICOC requests more information.

The ICOC appointed Dr. Wise Young as a scientific member to the Grants Working Group as a replacement for Alan Trownson. Wise Young, M.D., Ph.D. is a professor at Rutgers University and founding director of the W.M. Keck Center for Collaborative Neuroscience. Dr. Young was part of the team that discovered and established high-dose methylprednisolone as the first effective therapy for spinal cord injuries.

Interim President Zach Hall reported on the progress of the CIRM, including the latest hire, Geoffrey Lomax, Dr.PH, as Senior Officer for the Standards Working Group. Dr. Lomax has been conducting environmental and occupational health research since 1985. He is the former

Research Director for the California Environmental Health Investigations Branch where he supported the professional and research needs of the legislatively mandated Expert Working Group that developed a strategic plan for the Environmental Health Surveillance System in California. Dr. Lomax received his BS in Environmental Toxicology from the University of California at Davis and his doctorate within the Division of Environmental Health Sciences in the School of Public Health at the University of California at Berkeley.

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